

# MONTHLY WEATHER REPORT

**MARCH 1982**

COMPILED FROM RETURNS OF OFFICIAL AND VOLUNTARY OBSERVERS

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## Wet but sunny. Stormy first half of month; warm spell later.

Until the 21st pressure was mostly low to the north and high to the south with eastward-moving frontal systems being especially prevalent during the second week when they were almost daily occurrences. On the 5th a ridge of high pressure intervened and the following front became slow-moving from north-east to south-west England before weakening on the 7th. Vigorous depressions advanced north-eastwards across north Scotland during the night of the 2nd/3rd and over Northern Ireland and Scotland early on the 12th. On the 15th a cold front wave came north-eastwards over the southern half of England and developed into a deep depression off the north-east of Scotland. The low then filled slowly while a shallow depression moved south-eastwards across central areas on the 19th.

Pressure began to rise on the 21st as a large anticyclone built from the south-west to become centred off East Anglia from the 24th until its collapse on the 27th. Cold fronts plunged southwards across all parts on the 28th and 29th, but another anticyclone came north-eastwards across Scotland on the 31st.

### Weather

For three weeks the weather was unsettled and at times stormy, but with sunshine between the rain and showers. In sharp contrast the fourth week was dry, warm and sunny in most areas. However, the month ended rather cold with further showers. At times the showers were wintry, often with snow pellets or hail and, particularly over the south-eastern half of England, thundery. At London Weather Centre six days were reported with thunder; this is the greatest March total in Greater London this century. A man was killed by lightning at Brighton on the 6th.

### Wind

Until the 17th winds were frequently fresh or strong and, especially over exposed northern, western and southern parts, there were gales at times. The gales were severe and reached storm force in places on some occasion. The night of the 2nd/3rd was particularly stormy in the north; Great Dun Fell (Cumbria) with 97 and 73 kn, the Royal Observatory, Blackford Hill, in Edinburgh with 87 and 55 kn and the Glasgow area with 71 and 46 kn at Abbotsinch all had their highest gusts and hourly mean speeds in March since records began (1963, 1915 and 1946 respectively, although at Blackford Hill there was a break from 1968 to 1975). Many homes, mostly in Ayrshire and Cumbria were without electricity; a container vessel broke up near Stranraer (Dumfries and Galloway Region); ferries were stormbound, road and rail transport systems were disrupted by fallen trees, but, fortunately, structural damage was slight. The remainder of the month was quieter generally except in the far north where it continued to be windy at times. Wind directions were mainly between south-west and north-westerly, but during the last week they were more variable and the month ended with north-easterlies over most areas.

### Temperature

In all parts of the United Kingdom monthly mean temperatures were within 1°C of and mostly above average. Only over the north-west of Scotland, the western half of Northern Ireland, Jersey and at a few places in South Wales and the extreme south of England were they below average.

For three weeks temperatures were mostly near normal. Daytime temperatures began to rise at the start of the fourth week and most inland and eastern areas had maxima exceeding 15°C between the 24th and 27th, with 21.1°C at Banchory (Grampian Region) on the 25th and 19.1°C at Weston Park, Sheffield, on the 26th. However, temperatures failed to rise above 6°C at some places on the coasts of Essex and northern Kent on the 26th because of persistent fog. Temperatures then fell sharply and the last three days of the month were rather cold in most parts. Frost occurred at times throughout the month although much of it was slight and not widespread.

### Rainfall

Above-average rainfall occurred for the seventh consecutive March over Scotland and Northern Ireland and the sixth over England and Wales. More than twice the average fell in scattered areas of Britain and the west of Northern Ireland. But at a few places in east Scotland, north-east England, eastern Kent and the Isle of Man totals were a little below normal.

All areas had showers or longer periods of rain during the first three weeks of the month, the rainfall being heavy at times, particularly over western areas. Large daily totals included 88.2 mm at Lubreoch Dam, Lock Lyon, (Tayside Region) on the 2nd, 135.2 mm at Honister Pass (Cumbria) on the 9th and 85.8 mm at Llydaw Intake in Snowdonia on the 14th, while the fall of 45.5 mm at Easkdalemuir (Dumfries and Galloway Region) on the 9th was the most in a day in March since records began there in 1910. Flooding was reported in Angus and Dumfriesshire on the 12th, the Thames Valley on the 15th and in York on the 16th. The remaining ten days were mainly dry although the far north had a little rain at times and most places some showers on the 29th.

### Snow

Snow showers fell over the north of Britain at times during the first three weeks of the month, particularly between the 8th and 17th when they were also reported on some occasions in parts of the

south. Longer periods of snow occurred over Scotland, especially in the north, on the 12th and briefly over some southern hills on the 15th. Falls of snow were mostly slight and short-lived except over higher ground in Scotland. On the 12th 23 cm were measured at Lagganlia (Highland Region) and 20 cm at Crawfordjohn (Strathclyde Region) while several roads were blocked by drifts. Wintry showers also fell in many areas on the 29th.

### Sunshine

Despite the unsettled nature of much of the month's weather sunshine totals were generally above normal with more than 140 per cent of average being recorded over the Isle of Man, the east of Northern Ireland, much of eastern England and in parts of the Midlands and the south of England. It was the sunniest March this century over Northern Ireland as a whole and at Scarborough (North Yorkshire) since 1907, while at Dumfries only 1929 has been sunnier since records began there in 1910. In contrast parts of northern Scotland had less sunshine than normal.

While sunshine occurred at times throughout the month the period from the 22nd to the 27th was particularly sunny except in the far north and north-west.

### Fog

There were overnight fog patches between the 5th and 9th and from the 19th to the 29th, mainly over central and south-eastern parts of England where fog was widespread and dense in places on the 28th. On all occasions the fog cleared during the following morning. Reports of coastal fog were mostly confined to the period 25th to 28th, when it was widespread and rather persistent in the south, especially in the south-east. Some hill fog occurred, mostly in association with precipitation, being particularly widespread over western and central areas of Britain on the 6th and in the south-west on the 21st.

### Miscellaneous Phenomena

None reported.

Table 1 District values

District	air temperature °C					mean 30-cm soil temp °C	rain-days	rainfall	sunshine
	Highest Max*	Lowest Min*	max.	min.	mean				
	difference from average					% of average			
0 Scotland N	15.4	-3.1	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	+0.1	+5	164	101
1 Scotland E	19.2	-5.2	+0.6	+0.4	+0.5	+0.6	+2	154	123
2 England E & NE	18.1	-3.2	+0.9	+0.4	+0.6	+0.7	+3	153	140
3 East Anglia	18.9	-4.3	+0.7	+0.3	+0.5	+0.5	+5	135	139
4 Midland Counties	19.1	-3.6	+0.6	+0.4	+0.5	+0.7	+7	177	131
5 England SE & Central S	17.9	-4.4	+0.5	+0.1	+0.3	+0.3	+5	159	130
6 Scotland W	14.8	-5.2	+0.4	-0.3	+0.1	+0.4	+4	177	116
7 England NW & Wales N	16.6	-3.3	+0.3	+0.4	+0.4	+0.3	+5	179	123
8 England SW & Wales S	16.9	-2.8	+0.1	-0.1	0.0	+0.7	+6	185	120
N Ireland	15.2	-2.7	+0.3	-0.3	0.0	+0.2	+4	160	144
Scotland	19.2	-5.2	+0.3	+0.1	+0.2	+0.4	+4	165	113
England & Wales	19.1	-4.4	+0.5	+0.3	+0.4	+0.5	+5	165	131

\*Highest maximum and lowest minimum of District Value Stations